

Help for Youth Coping During a Flood

Life can be particularly hard on young people during a flood. You may have thoughts and fears that are normal for everyone during this kind of an emergency. You may even feel helpless to find a way to help and slide into despair or depression, unless you look after yourself.

These are some common thoughts young people have during emergencies like a major flood:

I must be losing it.	What you are feeling is a common reaction to an unusual, emergency situation.
I've got this under control. I don't need help.	Even though you're very capable and can deal with a lot, everybody needs help from their friends and family, sometimes.
No one else understands.	It's true that your feelings and experiences are unique to you. But other people are going through this, just like you are. Everyone has a different way to make sense of what is happening in an emergency.
Everything is gone forever.	Give yourself time to deal with losses. Favourite things may be lost, but it's important to remember that over time, you will find and create new treasures.
Nothing will ever be the same.	While some things are changed forever, most things in your daily life will return to normal in time.
If one more person crosses me, I'm going to snap!	It's normal to feel irritable, angry and frustrated when you're in stressful situations. Many people suffer a lot of hurt and damage because of the flood and react in unusual ways. Be patient with others and yourself.
I should have... I could have... If only I had...	People often think that bad things happen because they did or didn't do something. This isn't true! No one person can control the effects of a flood.

There are lots of healthy ways to cope with your stress:

- Talk to people you trust about your feelings – face to face, email, text, phone. This could be a friend, parent, elder, teacher, counsellor or a phone line support person.
- Have fun! Do things you enjoy. Remember physical activity/exercise can lower stress and make you feel happier and energized.
- Find ways to relax. Take a walk, read, listen to music, watch a movie, have a nap, pray, smudge, do yoga, do deep breathing, attend a spiritual ceremony or join a support group. For more relaxation tips, go to: www.de-stress.ca.
- Ask your friends what helps them feel better and cope with the stress.
- Tell a story about how the flood has affected you: draw, write, sing, dance, journal, take photos.
- Think about times in the past when things were difficult for you, and what helped you get through the hard times then.
- Helping out others when you're stressed takes you outside your own troubles for awhile.
- Volunteer to help with the flood efforts, fundraise, comfort/reach out to family and friends.
- Find a way to remember both the good and the bad things during the emergency (ex: shoot a video, write, take pictures).
- Try not to be too hard on yourself or others.

Use outside support and resources when you need them

If you, your family, friends or neighbours are having a hard time dealing with stress, you can get help:

- Health Links – Info Santé can help you find resources through your local regional health authority or community mental health services office. Call 204-788-8200 in Winnipeg; toll free 1-888-315-9257; 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Manitobans can call Manitoba Farm and Rural Support Services at 1-866-367-3276 toll free; 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. weekdays. Or, go to www.ruralsupport.ca.
- Clinic Community Health Centre 24-hour Crisis Line can provide counselling and referrals for all Manitobans. Call 204-786-8686 in Winnipeg; toll free 1-888-322-3019; 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Kids Help Phone has trained counsellors who help young people all across the province. Call: 1-800-668-6868 toll free; 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Youth Emergency Crisis Stabilization System has a phone line for young people all across the province. Call 204-949-4777 in Winnipeg; 1-888-383-2776 toll free; 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- If you or someone you know is thinking of suicide, the Manitoba Suicide Line is available to all Manitobans. Call 1-877-435-7170 toll free; 24 hours a day, seven days a week; or go to www.reasonstolive.ca.